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ABSTRACT

This first of a series of four interrelated studies reviewed the current participation rates of Western Australia's Aborigines in technical and further education (TAFE) courses, surveyed 101 students in the Aboriginal Access course to identify problems they had, and surveyed teachers in the Access course and in mainstream vocational courses to identify strategies to increase Aboriginal enrollment in TAFE vocational courses. More than 68 percent of Western Australia Aboriginal students in TAFE courses were enrolled in the Aboriginal Access course in order to gain access to employment. However, entry to mainstream courses via the Access course is extremely low (traditionally, only about 21 percent of Access students move on to those courses). Few of the Aboriginal students surveyed in the second study reported major problems, and the problems most frequently reported were money and illness. Seventy-seven percent of the students surveyed reported a desire to work. The largest number (27 percent) aspired to paraprofessional careers, and another 19 percent wanted to be professionals. Response rate in the teacher survey (third study) was 60 percent from urban Access teachers but only 20 percent from urban mainstream teachers. The major prohibitive factors cited were low educational background, low literacy and numeracy skills, and lack of self-confidence. The two strategies most often suggested by teachers to overcome the major barriers to mainstream participation were not directly related to the factors they considered most prohibitive. The strategies were enclave support to increase self-development, counseling, and the overcoming of feelings of isolation; and the promotion of mainstream courses. The fourth study reported the findings of a rural educator's workshop. (The document includes 10 references, the survey instruments, and summaries of responses.) (CML)

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REDRESSING THE BALANCE :

THE ROLE OF TAFE IN ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

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- Azelma Ensor -

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AZELMA ENSOR

1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PARAMETERS FOR THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The following report was commissioned by the TAFE National Centre for Research and Development to investigate strategies for improving Aboriginal access to TAFE vocational courses. The research was conducted under the auspices of the Curriculum, Research and Development Unit of the West Australian Office of TAFE, from September 1988 to March 1989.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The major aims of the project were as follows:

- To review the current participation rates of Aborigines in TAFE courses.
- To identify strategies which may give rise to increasing the number of Aboriginal people in TAFE vocational courses.
- To make recommendations on ways in which TAFE can facilitate people of Aboriginal descent gaining access to TAFE courses.

1.3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The issue of Aboriginal education has attracted considerable attention in recent years. As a consequence, there exists a large body of documentation containing recommendations for improving educational opportunities for Aboriginal Australians.

Although these reviews have been commissioned by relatively diverse interest groups including educational institutions (Gallagher & Satour 1987, Heaney 1988), Aboriginal organizations (Roberts 1987, Fowell & Parkinson 1988) and political parties (Watts 1988, Hughes 1988), they share a number of common perceptions regarding the current status of Aboriginal education generally, and about the role of TAFE in particular.

1.3.1 Education Participation

There appears to be general agreement among all interested parties that in terms of education, Aborigines remain the most severely disadvantaged group of people in Australia. This applies across all sectors of education (see Table 1).

Whilst disparities in education participation rates between Aborigines and all Australians are relatively minimal during the pre-primary and lower primary years (5-9 years), the gap widens considerably for children aged 10 to 15; the participation rate for all Australians is 98.3 per cent compared with only 83.1 per cent for Aboriginal Australians.
It should be noted that education for 10 to 15 year olds is compulsory.

The situation for post-compulsory education is predictably worse, with only 31.6 per cent of Aboriginal people participating in education compared with 74.5 per cent of all Australians. The most marked disparity in participation rates is in the 18 to 20 and 21 to 24 year age groups where Aborigines account for only 7.4 and 4.1 per cent of total educational enrolments respectively.

Table 1: Education participation rates for Aborigines and all Australians

Age Group	Aboriginal People (Per Cent)	All Australians (Per Cent)
5 - 9 years	88.2	99.0
10 - 15 years	83.1	98.3
16 - 17 years	31.6	74.5
18 - 20 years	7.5	41.4
21 - 24 years	4.1	20.4
25 yrs & over	2.7	7.9

Note: The rates for the 16 - 25 years and over groups show participation in schooling, TAFE and higher education.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1986

1.3.2 Participation in Remote Areas

Geographic isolation is widely recognized as a major barrier to educational opportunities for Aboriginal people. It is estimated that approximately one-third of the Aboriginal population is located in small townships and communities of less than 1,000 people.

Table 2 below highlights the disparities in post-compulsory participation rates between Aborigines living in remote and populated areas. It can be seen that people in the 18 to 20 and 21 to 24 year age groups living in remote areas have considerably lower participation rates than their counterparts in more populated areas. However, the most severely educationally disadvantaged groups are those people 25 years and over living in areas with a population of less than 1,000. Only 1 per cent of these Aborigines are participating in some form of education.

Table 2: Post-compulsory participation rates for Aborigines in remote and populated areas

Age Group	Areas with Population less 1,000 (per cent)	Areas with Population more 1,000 (per cent)
16 - 17 years	23.5	34.8
18 - 20 years	4.2	9.2
21 - 24 years	1.6	5.2
25 yrs & over	1.0	3.5

1.3.3 The Role of TAFE

There is little doubt that better education services are essential to overcome the economic and employment disadvantages experienced by Aboriginal people. The role of TAFE in this process is seen as vital for the following reasons:

- As the major provider of "second chance" education programmes, TAFE is best suited to remediating the prior educational disadvantages experienced by many Aboriginal people during their compulsory schooling years.

- The vocational orientation of TAFE courses allows the development of marketable skills which can result in positive employment outcomes for Aboriginal people.

- The capacity of TAFE to provide educational programmes in remote towns and centres, including courses which meet specific community needs facilitates desirable outcomes such as self-management and employment in isolated areas.

- TAFE can provide an educational link for those Aborigines wishing to pursue tertiary qualifications who do not possess the pre-requisite skills for direct entry to tertiary institutions.

It is clear that TAFE's potential contribution to Aboriginal education is unique among education providers. It is however, also apparent that TAFE's current contribution falls far short of that for other Australians.

Aboriginal participation in TAFE courses is well below that for all Australians. This pattern reflects the overall post-compulsory participation profile with the most severely disadvantaged people being, once again, the 18-20 and 21-24 year age groups (see Table 3). In the 18-20 year age group Aborigines make up only 4 per cent of TAFE enrolments compared with 22.7 per cent for all Australians.

Table 3: TAFE participation rates for Aborigines and all Australians

Age Group	Aboriginal People	All Australians
16 - 17 years	4.8	19.4
18 - 20 years	4.0	22.7
21 - 24 years	2.6	11.8
25 yrs & over	1.6	5.7

1.4 SUMMARY

It is evident that Aboriginal participation in both compulsory and post-compulsory education is considerably lower than for all Australians. People in the 18-24 year age group are the most severely educationally disadvantaged and this disadvantage is experienced more by Aborigines living in remote areas than in populated areas.

Furthermore, in spite of TAFE's unique potential for vocational training and education, there is clear evidence that Aboriginal participation in TAFE reflects the same unacceptably low rates as for other educational sectors.

1.5 RESEARCH STRATEGY

The strategy considered most effective for the purposes of the current research was to conduct four separate but interrelated studies, each of which focused on a particular aspect of the overall project.

- The first component required the collection of information relating to the current participation patterns of Aboriginal students in TAFE courses throughout Western Australia.

- The second element involved a survey of students enrolled in the TAFE Aboriginal Access course to determine the nature and extent of problems experienced by Aboriginal students. In addition, information about the education and occupational aspirations of Access students was also obtained.

- The third study consisted of a survey of TAFE teaching staff, the purpose of which was to identify the major barriers to increased Aboriginal participation in TAFE mainstream courses from a teacher perspective.

- Finally, a workshop was conducted with Aboriginal education workers, TAFE liaison officers, teachers and principals from remote areas of the State which focused on the special needs of rural Aborigines and the secondary school/TAFE link for Aborigines.

2

STUDY ONE

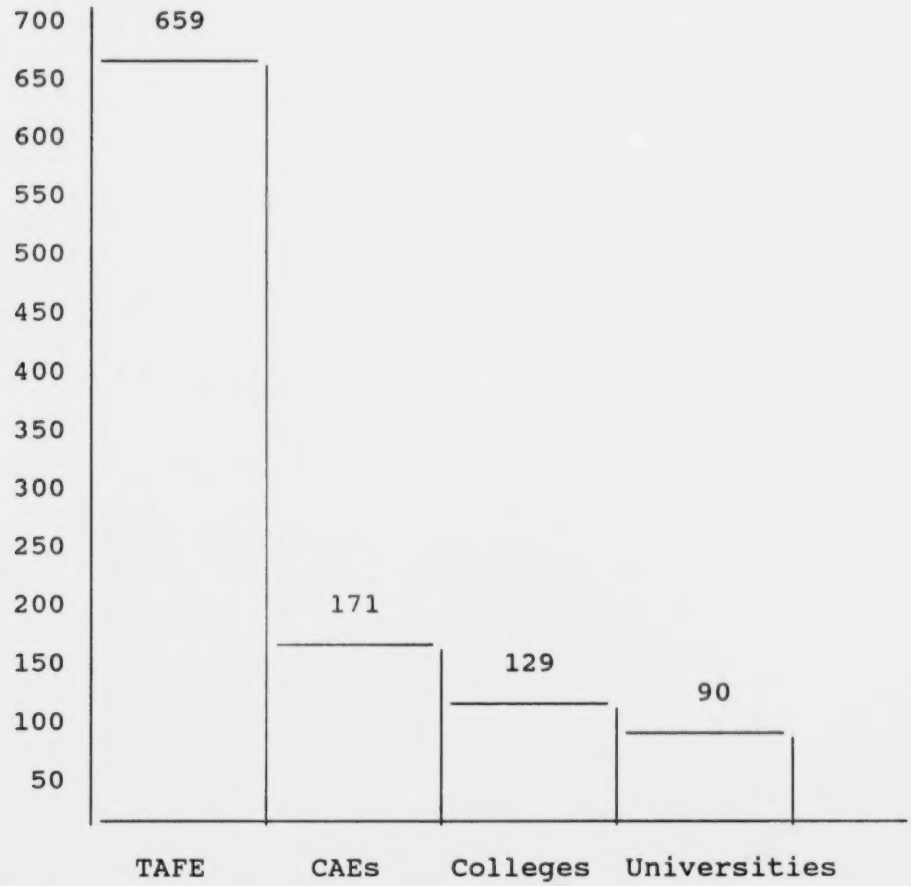
ABORIGINAL PARTICIPATION RATES IN TAFE COURSES

2.1 DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS ACROSS INSTITUTIONS

Data was obtained from the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) and included all recipients of the Aboriginal Study Assistance Scheme (ABSTUDY) in Western Australia studying at 42 educational institutions including universities, colleges of advanced education, private or specialist colleges and TAFE (see Appendix A for details of institutions).

It is evident from the institutional comparisons presented in Figure 1 below that TAFE is the major provider of post-compulsory education for Aboriginal people in Western Australia. With a total of 659 full-time and part-time enrolments, TAFE has a higher number of Aboriginal students than the other three institution groups combined.

Figure 1: Institutional comparisons of Aboriginal participation in post-secondary education, September, 1988



NOTE: College group is made up of private, specialist and non-TAFE government colleges.

2.2 TAFE ABORIGINAL STUDENT PROFILE

2.2.1 Data Source

Initial enquiries indicated that the TAFE student database could not provide reliable data concerning the number of Aboriginal students enrolled in TAFE courses.

Difficulty with TAFE records would appear to be a consequence of a long-standing TAFE policy stipulating that prospective students could not be asked to identify their cultural origin on enrolment forms. Although this policy was changed in 1988 to allow an optional question on Aboriginality, further investigation showed that large discrepancies still exist between the central student database and course records of Aboriginal enrolments.

Due to the unreliability of data from TAFE student records, DEET ABSTUDY records were used to compile a profile of Aboriginal TAFE students.

2.2.2 Age

Table 4 shows that the age distribution of TAFE Aboriginal enrolments in Western Australia is fairly representative of the national pattern (see Table 1) with the lowest participation rates being in the 18-20 and 21-24 year age groups. However, these data show a reversal for the above-mentioned groups in that the lowest participation rate in West Australia is for those Aborigines aged between 21 and 24. The highest number of Aboriginal enrolments are in the 25 and over age group.

Table 4: Age distribution of West Australian Aboriginal TAFE students

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage of Total Enrolment
16 - 17 years	111	16.8
18 - 20 years	103	15.6
21 - 24 years	90	13.7
25 yrs & over	355	53.9
TOTAL	659	100.0

2.2.3 Sex

There is a marked difference in the number of women and men participating in TAFE courses in West Australia (see Table 5). More than twice as many women (379) than men (159) are enrolled in TAFE courses.

Table 5: Distribution of Aboriginal TAFE students by Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage of Total Enrolments
Female	472	71.6
Male	187	28.4
TOTAL	659	100.0

2.2.4 Location

It can be seen from Table 6 below that a higher number of Aborigines are enrolled in TAFE courses in rural than in urban areas.

Table 6: The distribution of Aboriginal TAFE students in urban and rural areas

Location	Frequency	Percent
Urban	293	43.9
Rural	339	51.1
External	27	4.1
TOTAL	659	100.0

This finding may not appear to be in keeping with previous information which suggested that participation rates were lower in rural than in urban areas. It should be remembered however, that the data presented earlier were based on enrolment at all post-compulsory institutions including universities and CAE's which are primarily located in urban areas. When both the number of rural TAFE centres and the high rural Aboriginal population are taken into account, it is not surprising that TAFE enrolments in country areas are greater than those in urban areas.

2.2.5 Courses Studied

Table 7: Courses studied by Aboriginal TAFE students

Course	Frequency	Percent
Access/Bridging	425	68.6
Short Courses	49	7.4
Pre-apprenticeship	29	4.4
Certificates	83	12.6
Diplomas	46	7.0
TOTAL	659	100.0

Course enrolment options showed that the majority (68.6 per cent) of Aboriginal TAFE students are enrolled in access or bridging courses of one type or another. Enrolment records show that of these courses, the Aboriginal Access Course attracts the highest number of students. Only 24 per cent of current students are undertaking accredited courses leading to a Certificate or Diploma*.

* Note: The term Diploma refers to a unique West Australian TAFE award which is now being discontinued. This award is considered equivalent to the new Associate Diploma award.

2.3 CONCLUSION

Given the high proportion of Aboriginal students enrolled in the Aboriginal Access course, it is evident that this course is the chief point of contact with TAFE for the majority of Aboriginal people. Furthermore, the remedial orientation of the "Access" course provides some preliminary indication that low participation rates in vocational courses may be due, at least in part, to a lack of the pre-requisite skills necessary for direct mainstream entry.

3

STUDY TWO

STUDENT SURVEY

3.1 RATIONALE

Previous research has shown, that in terms of providing access to further education, the TAFE Aboriginal Access course has a relatively poor success rate.

Heaney (1988) found that only 21 per cent of the 60 past Access students surveyed had continued on to accredited mainstream courses. Employment outcomes were even lower with only 15 per cent of survey respondents gaining employment after the course. The remaining 64 per cent returned either to home duties or unemployment.

Notwithstanding the small sample size of Heaney's study, the low success rates in employment and further education outcomes are of major concern and clearly indicate the need for a more detailed examination of the course. Student variables that may influence education and employment outcomes should also be investigated. These factors include; reasons for enrolling, problems faced while studying, future career aspirations, and location of students.

3.2 BACKGROUND OF ABORIGINAL ACCESS COURSE

The TAFE Aboriginal Access course was first piloted at Perth Technical College in 1975. The course was developed in response to requests from the local Aboriginal community. In the thirteen years since its inception, enrolments have grown substantially and the number of centres offering the course has been extended to five metropolitan and three country colleges. The course is also available in a number of TAFE regional centres.

Although the relative focus of the course has changed somewhat during this time, considerable emphasis has consistently been placed on two major objectives:

- The provision of an educational programme which allows students to obtain the specific academic skills necessary to access further education.

- The improvement of employment opportunities by raising general educational standards and increasing job-seeking skills and knowledge of career alternatives.

While the specific programme of study may vary from college to college, all Aboriginal Access courses offer literacy and numeracy subjects together with a range of options depending upon available expertise, such as Aboriginal studies, health education and recreation.

TAFE currently offers the Aboriginal Access course to all people of stated Aboriginal descent, over the age of 16 who are not enrolled in secondary school.

Although the course does not have a prescribed completion time, it is typically of two years duration, and admission may be sought at any time during the year.

3.2.1 Review of Aboriginal Access Course

A review of the Aboriginal Access course is currently being undertaken with a view to its accreditation by the Western Australian Council of Tertiary Awards (WACTA) in the near future.

3.3 DEVELOPMENT OF SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The major focus of the survey was to obtain information on three specific student variables; reasons for enrolling, problems encountered while studying, and future career aspirations. In addition, a range of demographic information such as, location of college attended, prior educational achievement and previous employment status was also obtained.

The instrument selected as most appropriate for the purposes of the present study was based on that developed by Cumming (1985). The questionnaire was modified to suit the purposes of the current investigation with the addition of a number of items which were derived from discussions with Aboriginal groups and the available literature relating to Aboriginal education.

A draft survey was constructed and piloted with a group of students enrolled in the Aboriginal bridging course at Curtin University. Feedback on the draft was also sought from TAFE Aboriginal Access course co-ordinators at all urban and rural colleges and centres and a number of non-TAFE rural colleges elsewhere.

The information obtained from both the pilot study and feedback from course co-ordinators resulted in several minor modifications relating primarily to presentation and simplification of wording. (Refer to Appendix B for copy of survey).

3.4 SAMPLE

Student numbers at the time of survey were substantially lower than was expected on the basis of data provided by DEET. DEET ABSTUDY records for September, 1988 showed that 283 students were enrolled in the Aboriginal Access course at the 8 colleges who participated in the survey. However, only 87 students were available at the time of survey in November. This represents a discrepancy of 70 per cent between the sample statistic and the population parameter.
A test for goodness-of-fit was calculated for each of the demographic variables to determine the level of sample representativeness. The results of these analyses showed no significant differences between the sample and population for any of the background variables.

Furthermore, in view of the disproportionately low response rate obtained from rural areas it was decided to include students enrolled in Aboriginal Access courses in two non-TAFE rural colleges. After inclusion of these responses, tests for goodness-of-fit showed no significant differences for any of the target variables between TAFE and non-TAFE respondents. Hence, the final sample size was increased to 101.

3.5 ADMINISTRATION

3.5.1 Urban Colleges

The survey instrument was administered to students enrolled in Aboriginal Access courses in all five metropolitan TAFE colleges by the research officer responsible for the project.

A group testing procedure was used in which the students completed the items on the survey form one at a time. The items were read out by the person administering the survey (See Appendix C). This procedures was adopted to enhance Aboriginal group cohesion and provide an opportunity for students to seek clarification where necessary. Administration time was approximately 20-30 minutes depending upon class size.

3.5.2 Rural Colleges and Centres

Copies of the survey together with detailed instructions for administration (see Appendix C) were posted to the three TAFE rural colleges, one regional centre and two rural non-TAFE colleges. Course co-ordinators were requested to administer the survey to students as a group, adhering to the instructions provided, and return completed questionnaires to the research officer responsible for the project.

3.6 STUDENT PROFILE

3.6.1 Age

An analysis of the age distribution of students participating in Access courses shows that those aged 25 years and over account for 62.3 per cent of enrolments (see Table 8). This indicates an upward shift in the age of students over recent years. Goldsworthy et al (1981), in their review of Aboriginal Access courses, reported that the majority of students at that time were aged between 16 and 25. However, they noted an increase over previous years in the number of students aged 25 and over. This trend appears to have continued during the last seven years to a point where enrolments for the 25 years and over group exceeds that of all other age groups.

Table 8: Age distribution of Aboriginal Access students

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
16 - 17 years	13	12.9
18 - 20 years	15	14.9
21 - 24 years	10	9.9
25 yrs & over	63	62.3
TOTAL	101	100.0

3.6.2 Sex

There is a marked disproportion in the number of men and women enrolled in Access courses; seventy-seven per cent of current students are women. The sex distribution of students appears to have changed substantially since 1981 when Goldsworthy et al (1981) noted that the majority of Access students were men. However, a more detailed analysis reveals that the disparity is due mainly to the high female enrolment in the 25 and over age group (see Table 9).

Table 9: Sex distribution of Aboriginal Access students

Age Group	Percentage of Female Respondents	Percentage of Male Respondents
16 - 17 years	5.0	7.9
18 - 20 years	8.9	6.0
21 - 24 years	7.9	2.0
25 yrs & over	55.4	6.9
TOTAL	77.2	22.8

3.6.3 Educational Background of Access Students

Although the majority (66 per cent) of current Access students had completed some secondary level education, 22 per cent had exited from formal schooling at some time during their primary school years. Given the remedial orientation of the Access course, it was not surprising to find that only 4 per cent of the students surveyed had previously completed Year 12.

Very few of the current Access students had completed other courses prior to enrolling in the Access course. Of the 14 per cent who had, the courses most frequently undertaken were Business, Secretarial and Childcare (see Appendix D for details).

A somewhat higher proportion of students reported having had limited previous experience with post-compulsory education programmes. Nineteen per cent of those surveyed had commenced a course at some time prior to enrolling in the Access course. All respondents had withdrawn within six months of commencement. The course from which the highest number of students had previously withdrawn was the Aboriginal Access course (see Appendix E for details).

3.6.4 Prior Employment Status

Table 10 below shows that the principal occupation for the majority (50.5 per cent) of students prior to enrolment in the Access course was housecare. Only 10.9 per cent of respondents were in full-time employment, while almost one quarter of the sample reported that they were seeking employment prior to commencing the course.

Table 10: Prior employment status of Access students

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Housecare	51	50.5
F/T Employment	11	10.9
P/T Employment	3	2.9
Seeking Employment	24	23.8
Self-Employment	1	1.0
Not Seeking Employment	11	10.9
TOTAL	101	100.0

Further analysis showed differences in prior employment status for men and women from rural and urban areas. It is apparent (see Table 11) that considerably more women (48.3 per cent) than men (2 per cent) listed housecare as their principal occupation. There was little difference between the sexes in urban and rural areas.

Furthermore, while the percentage of women and men in full-time employment was identical in urban areas (4 per cent), the number of men in full-time employment in rural areas was double that of their female counterparts.

In addition, a higher percentage of urban women were seeking employment prior to the course (11.9 per cent) than women from country areas (5.8 per cent). There was however, a sharp contrast between the sexes in that substantially fewer men than women were seeking employment (6 and 17.7 per cent respectively).

Table 11: Prior occupational status of men and women from urban and rural areas (percentage of total sample)

Prior Occupation	URBAN		RURAL	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Housecare	27.6	1.0	20.7	1.0
F/T Employment	4.0	4.0	2.0	1.0
P/T Employment	-	1.0	2.0	-
Seeking Employment	11.9	4.0	5.8	2.0
Self-Employed	-	1.0	-	-
Not Seeking Employment	-	4.0	3.0	4.0

3.7 REASONS FOR ENROLLING IN THE COURSE

Students reported a wide variety of reasons for enrolling in the Aboriginal Access course (see Table 12). The principal reason cited as most important in the decision to enrol was to improve their education (86.1 per cent). Other major reasons for enrolling included gaining access to employment (68.3 per cent) and improving self-confidence (63.4 per cent).

The reason least often cited as strongly influential was to learn about Aboriginal culture. Only 28.7 per cent of respondents considered this a major reason for enrolling in the course.

Table 12: Major and minor reasons for enrolling in the course

Reasons	Major Reasons %	Minor Reasons %	Total Reasons %
To improve education	86.1	9.9	96.0
To improve confidence	63.4	27.7	91.1
To get a job	68.3	19.8	88.1
Learning things for daily life	38.6	43.6	83.2
To develop new career interests	50.5	28.7	79.2
Learn things of interest	38.6	38.6	77.2
Access to further education	39.6	36.6	76.2
To meet people	32.7	34.7	67.4
To help their children	47.5	14.9	62.4
Learn about Aboriginal culture	28.7	24.8	53.4

More detailed analyses showed that there were no significant different reasons for enrolling in the course between urban and rural students. There were however, significant differences found in frequencies for younger and older men and women for a number of the major reasons cited.

These differences are highlighted below in the tables.

3.7.1 Meeting People

Women over the age of 25 most frequently reported one of their major reasons for enrolling in the Access course was to meet people (91.3 per cent). Fewer younger (60 per cent) or older (40 per cent) men reported this reason as important. Very few women under 25 (8.7 per cent) considered the opportunity to meet people as a major reason for enrolling in the course (see Table 13).

Table 13: Percentage of younger and older men and women who selected "to meet people" as a major reason for enrolling

Age Group	Women	Men
Under 25 years	8.7	60.0
Over 25 years	91.3	40.0

Chi Square = 7.39074, df = 1, $p < .01$

3.7.2 Improving Self-confidence

Seventy-one per cent of older women reported that one of their most important reasons for enrolling in the course was to improve self-confidence. This was also a major reason for 60 per cent of the younger men and 40 per cent of the older men. Relatively few women under the age of 25 (28.6 per cent) viewed improving self-confidence as a major reason for undertaking the course (see Table 14).

Table 14: Percentage of younger and older men and women who selected "improving self-confidence" as a major reason for enrolling

Age Group	Women	Men
Under 25 years	28.6	60.0
Over 25 years	71.4	40.0

Chi Square = 4.92725, df = 1, $p < .05$

3.7.3 Improving Education

A high proportion of women over 25 (75.8 per cent) and men under 25 (66.7 per cent) reported that one of the major reasons they enrolled in the course was to improve their education. Markedly fewer older men (33.3 per cent) and younger women (24.2 per cent) considered improving their education as a major reason for enrolling (see Table 15).

Table 15: Percentage of younger and older men and women who selected "to improve education" as a major reason for enrolling

Age Group	Women	Men
Under 25 years	24.2	66.7
Over 25 years	75.8	33.3

Chi Square = 12.69155, df = 1, $p < .01$

3.7.4 Access to Employment

Men under the age of 25 (75.0 per cent) accounted for the highest percentage of students who reported increased access to employment as a major reason for enrolling in this course. Access to employment was important to marginally fewer older women (66.0 per cent) but to relatively fewer women under 25 (34.0 per cent). Only one quarter of male students over the age of 25 reported access to employment as a major influence in their decision to enrol (see Table 16).

Table 16: Percentage of younger and older men and women who selected "access to employment" as a major reason for enrolling

Age Group	Women	Men
Under 25 years	34.0	75.0
Over 25 years	66.0	25.0

Chi Square = 8.42221, df = 1, $p < .01$

3.8 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED WHILE STUDYING

Relatively few students reported having had major problems while enrolled in the Access course (see Table 17). The most frequently reported problems across the entire sample were money (62.4 per cent) and illness (53.4 per cent).

Table 17: Major and minor problems experienced by students while studying

Reasons	Major Problems %	Minor Problems %	Total Problems %
Money	14.9	47.5	62.4
Illness	15.8	37.6	53.4
No place to study at home	10.9	22.8	33.7
Poor study habits	8.9	23.8	32.7
Housing	6.9	23.9	30.7
No time for other things	5.0	24.8	29.8
Course content too difficult	3.0	24.8	27.8
Transport	7.9	19.8	27.7
Housing	7.9	18.8	26.7
Family	4.0	19.8	23.8
Discrimination	8.9	14.9	23.8
Inadequate counselling	9.9	12.9	22.8
Course doesn't meet needs	5.9	15.8	21.7
Lack of help from teachers	6.9	13.9	20.8
Child care	8.9	11.9	20.8
Lack of friends	2.0	3.0	5.0

There were no significant differences between urban and rural students for any of the problems reported. In addition, the only significant difference between younger and older men and women in the problems experienced was related to money (see Table 18).

A higher proportion of younger men (64.7 per cent) and older women (67.4 per cent) cited money as a problem than did younger women (32.6 per cent) and older men (35.3 per cent).

Table 18: Percentage of younger and older men and women who reported money as a problem

Age Group	Women	Men
Under 25 years	32.6	64.7
Over 25 years	67.4	35.3

Chi Square = 5.27602, df = 1, $p < .05$

3.8.1 Counselling

Students most frequently sought counselling advice from Access course teachers and co-ordinators (59.4 per cent). Only 9 percent of respondents reported approaching the college counsellor for advice on a regular basis. This reluctance by Aboriginal Access students to utilize college counselling services has also been noted in previous reviews of Access courses.

3.9 CAREER ASPIRATIONS

Seventy-seven per cent of students surveyed reported a desire to undertake some kind of occupation in the future. There was little difference in the frequency of career aspirations for women and men (78 per cent and 83 per cent respectively).

The age of students appeared to have some influence on career aspirations, indicated by the higher percentage of respondents under the age of 25 (87 per cent) who reported a desire to undertake employment relative to those over 25 (71 per cent).

The geographical location of respondents also appeared to have an impact on career aspirations, in that more students living in the metropolitan area (78 per cent) reported occupational goals than those from rural areas (69 per cent).

3.8.1 Occupational Preferences

Students' vocational preferences were grouped according to the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO). These categories were used to provide information about the range and level of employment sought by respondents in a standardized form. The eight (8) ASCO groupings are as follows:

1 Managers and Administrators
2 Professionals
3 Para-professionals
4 Tradespeople
5 Clerks
6 Salespeople and Personal Service Workers
7 Plant and Machine Operators and Drivers
8 Labourers and Related Workers

Using these groupings, it can be seen from Table 19 below that occupational preferences were relatively evenly spread across those groupings for which responses were obtained except for Labourers and Related Workers. Only 5 per cent of respondents selected occupations in this group as desirable. The most frequently cited occupational preferences were in the para-professional field (27 per cent). Occupations classified in this group included, health and welfare work.

Table 19: Students' occupational preferences using ASCO groupings

ASCO Groupings	Frequency of Occupational Preferences	Per Cent
Professionals	15	19.2
Para-professionals	21	27.0
Tradespeople	10	12.8
Clerks	16	20.5
Salespeople & Personal Service Workers	12	15.4
Labourers & Related Workers	4	5.1
TOTAL	78	100.0

Note: Details of specific occupations listed by respondents are contained in Appendix F.

In view of the relatively large differences found in overall career aspirations between urban and rural respondents, further analysis was conducted to investigate the range and level of occupational preference as a function of location (see Table 20).

Table 20: Occupational preferences for urban and rural students

ASCO Groupings	Urban Students (Per Cent)	Rural Students (Per Cent)
Professionals	15.4	3.8
Para-professionals	11.5	15.4
Tradespeople	7.7	5.2
Clerks	14.1	6.4
Salespeople & Personal Service Workers	9.0	6.4
Labourers & Related Workers	1.3	3.8

This analysis showed that location had more influence at the upper and lower level of occupational groupings than in the mid-range.

The career aspirations of urban respondents were more frequently targeted at a professional level (15.4 per cent) than were those of rural students (3.8 per cent). Conversely, para-professional careers were more often attractive to rural (15.4 per cent) than urban students (11.5 per cent).

Although a low preference was given to labouring and related occupations by both urban and rural respondents, urban students considered occupations in this group less attractive (1.3 per cent) than people from country areas (3.8 per cent) who ranked it equally with their preference for professional careers.

3.9 EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

Fifty-one per cent of students reported a desire to undertake another educational course in the future. Of these students, the overwhelming majority (80.8 per cent) indicated a preference for courses offered by TAFE. The remaining 19.2 per cent selected higher education courses such as those offered in colleges of advanced education and universities as most desirable (see Appendix G for course details).

3.11 DISCUSSION

The student survey highlighted a number of important issues, not the least of which was the difficulty in obtaining reliable data on the number of students enrolled in the TAFE Aboriginal Access course. This problem has been repeatedly noted in previous course reviews and recommendations have been made to rectify current inadequacies in procedures for recording student enrolments (see Heaney 1988, p15).

Another concern which arose from the current study was the low level of male participation in the Access course. Previous research has suggested that there is a lack of incentive for men to participate due to the low level of financial support presently offered by ABSTUDY grants. This may be especially true for men who are supporting families. If this is the case, the proposed accreditation of the course with its commensurate rise in ABSTUDY grants should encourage higher male enrolments in the future.

Results obtained from the survey indicate a good match between the stated educational and employment objectives of the course and the major reasons cited by students for enrolling. In addition, it was found that the other reason students in the current study cited as influential in their decision to enrol - to improve self-confidence, supported Heaney's (1988) findings that students placed a high priority on this personal motivation.

No response differences were found between urban and rural students for any of the three most frequently cited reasons for enrolling in the Access course. However, these three reasons - access to employment, improvement in education and improvement in self-confidence - appeared to be differentially important to younger and older men and women. Significantly fewer men over 25 and women under 25 considered these factors as major reasons for enrolling than older women and younger men. Attempts to discover the reason for this finding produced an even more puzzling picture; further analysis revealed that the overall response rate for younger women and older men on the question relating to reasons for enrolling was markedly lower than for the other two groups of respondents (see Appendix K).

The only tentative conclusions that can be drawn from these findings at the present time are that either, the motivations of younger women and older men were of a nature that they did not wish to disclose, or that these people do not actually possess any strong motivation to participate in the course. Whichever

is the more logical explanation, it is clear from the results obtained, that at least in terms of motivation, Aboriginal Access students are not a homogenous group and that further investigation is essential to determine the role of age and sex in Aboriginal participation in TAFE courses.

Another interesting feature of the survey data was the low frequency of problems reported by students. The available literature on Aboriginal education and discussions with various interested groups suggested that a large proportion of Aborigines had experienced major difficulties while studying. This did not appear to be the case in the present study. While the most severe problems reported by those surveyed were illness and financial difficulties, these factors were reported by less than twenty per cent of respondents as a major problem.

The most obvious explanation for this finding is that those students who experienced severe difficulties had already withdrawn from the course and consequently did not participate in the survey. Given that the survey was conducted towards the end of the year, this is quite possible. It is, however, likely that the types of problems reported by the present sample of participating students are the same as those related to withdrawal. This contention is supported by Heaney's (1988) findings which indicate that two of the major reasons for student withdrawals were illness and financial difficulties.

The career aspirations of Aboriginal Access students brought to light in the current study demonstrated a high occupational motivation overall. However, while there was little difference in the frequency of career aspirations for men and women, results indicated that younger urban students had higher vocational motivation than older people living in rural areas. Given the limited employment opportunities available in isolated areas, the lower frequency of career aspirations of rural students was not surprising. Moreover, the widely recognized problem of a reduction in the employment goals of chronically unemployed persons may have accounted for the relative disinterest of students over the age of twenty-five.

Less predictable however, were the levels of occupational preference reported by respondents in the present study. Over 50 per cent of those surveyed indicated a preference for occupations requiring specialist training at a trades level or higher. Occupational preference was more strongly influenced by location (urban or rural) than by any other factor. This was particularly evident at the upper

and lower levels of occupational groupings. Urban respondents more frequently stated a preference for professional careers while rural people tended to view para-professional and labouring occupations as more attractive. Once again, variations in the availability of occupational opportunities, together with access to appropriate educational facilities in urban and rural areas, may account for these findings.

In comparison to employment aspirations, substantially fewer students indicated the desire to pursue further education. However, for those who did, the majority favoured courses offered by TAFE (see Appendix G). Furthermore, it is clear from the educational preferences reported by students that a very heavy emphasis was placed on vocational courses.

3.12 CONCLUSION

The results of the student survey indicate that TAFE has a major role to play in fulfilling the occupational and educational aspirations of current Access students. Moreover, given the high priority placed by the students surveyed on future employment and the kinds of occupations most favoured, it is clear that this role is primarily in terms of mainstream vocational courses. However, data presented earlier (see p14) show that entry to mainstream courses via the Aboriginal Access course is extremely low. Consequently, the need for further investigation regarding the major barriers to mainstream participation by Aboriginal people is clearly warranted.

4

STUDY THREE

TEACHER SURVEY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The third study was conducted to gain information from both mainstream and Access teachers regarding their perceptions of the major barriers to Aboriginal participation in TAFE mainstream courses. Their opinions were also sought about possible strategies that would most effectively overcome these barriers.

4.2 METHODOLOGY

Questionnaires were sent to all Access lecturers whose students had participated in the student survey. The teacher survey consisted of two open ended questions related to teacher perceptions of barriers to mainstream participation and possible remedial strategies (see Appendix H). Teachers were requested to complete the questionnaire themselves and to approach two mainstream teachers to do likewise.

4.3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.3.1 Response Rate

The overall return rate for the teacher survey was disappointingly low (see Table 21). Responses were considerably lower from mainstream teachers than from teachers of Access courses. In addition, more responses were received from teachers in rural areas than from those in the metropolitan area.

Table 21: Response rate for teacher survey

Course	Urban		Rural	
	Frequency	Response Rate	Frequency	Response Rate
Access	6	60.0	11	91.0
Mainstream	4	20.0	6	25.0

4.3.2 Barriers to Mainstream Participation

Responses obtained from the survey showed that teachers viewed lack of literacy and numeracy skills, poor educational background and lack of self-confidence as three of the major barriers to Aboriginal participation in TAFE mainstream courses (see Appendix I for further details). Further analysis revealed that there were no response differences between urban and rural teachers for any of these three factors.

However, differences were found in the responses of Access and Mainstream teachers for each of the three major prohibitive factors cited (see Table 22). A higher percentage of Access teachers perceived lack of self-confidence as a barrier than did those teaching in mainstream courses. Conversely, a higher proportion of mainstream teachers considered low literacy and numeracy skills and low educational background to be prohibitive to mainstream participation than did Access teachers.

Table 22: Major barriers to mainstream participation cited by Access and mainstream teachers

Major Barriers	Access Teachers (Per Cent)	Mainstream Teachers (Per Cent)
Low educational background	41.2	50.0
Low literacy and numeracy skills	41.2	60.0
Lack of Self-confidence	58.8	30.0

It is possible that the difference in response frequencies demonstrated by the results obtained, may be attributed to the potentially different role orientations of Access and mainstream teachers.

The closer contact that Access teachers have with their students, in particular, the significant counselling role described in study two (page 24) may result in a more student-centred perspective among Access teachers and thus a greater emphasis on personality attributes such as self-confidence. In contrast, the relatively

strong emphasis placed on skills-related barriers (low literacy and numeracy skills in particular) by mainstream teachers may be a function of a more traditionally task-oriented perspective.

4.3.3 Proposed Remedial Strategies

Interestingly, the two strategies most often suggested by teachers for overcoming the major barriers to mainstream participation were not directly related to the factors they considered most prohibitive (see Appendix J for details).

Fifty percent of teachers surveyed suggested that enclave support would offer a significant improvement in the likelihood of successful participation in mainstream courses. However, the emphasis was placed not on the academic support that could be provided by such an enclave system, but rather on issues such as self-development, counselling and in overcoming feelings of isolation which may be experienced by students in mainstream courses.

While only 7.4 per cent of teachers had considered lack of information about mainstream courses as a major prohibitive factor, the second most frequently proposed strategy was related to improvements in the promotion of mainstream courses to Aboriginal people (31 per cent). It was suggested that an effective marketing campaign targeted towards secondary and Access students would substantially increase participation rates in TAFE mainstream courses.

Another frequently proposed strategy was the provision of an in-service course for all lecturers involved with Aboriginal students (23 per cent). It was suggested that such a course, in allowing lecturers to gain a better understanding of Aboriginal culture, would foster more positive teacher/student relationships.

5

STUDY FOUR

WORKSHOP WITH RURAL EDUCATORS

5.1 CONFERENCE DETAILS

The Aboriginal Education Workers professional development conference held in November 1988 drew a range of participants involved in Aboriginal education in remote areas of the North-West of Western Australia. The majority of participants were Aboriginal education workers employed in primary and secondary schools in the Kimberley district. Others who attended included TAFE Aboriginal liaison officers and primary and secondary school principals and teachers.

5.2 WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the workshop was to discuss issues related to Aboriginal participation in TAFE for people living in remote areas with a particular emphasis on the secondary school/TAFE interface. This conference was chosen as a forum for these discussions as it offered a rare opportunity to seek the views of Aboriginal educators as well as others involved in Aboriginal education.

5.3 EDUCATION NEEDS OF RURAL ABORIGINES

There was a high level of agreement among participants that one of the primary educational needs of adult Aborigines living in remote areas is the acquisition of occupational skills relevant to specific community needs. Programmes seen as most desirable included; fencing, horsemanship, mechanics, bookkeeping, office administration and typing. Other community-centred courses which were also considered valuable were community management, community health and small business management.

Many participants considered that one of the strongest needs among adult Aborigines was to overcome the previous educational disadvantages so commonly experienced by Aboriginal people living in remote areas during their compulsory schooling years. Literacy and numeracy programmes were seen as the first step in this process and also as a means of bridging the gap to further educational opportunities.

5.4 FOSTERING ABORIGINAL PARTICIPATION IN TAFE

Workshop participants consider that one of the major difficulties in meeting the educational needs of adult Aborigines living in remote areas is a lack of appreciation of the educational resource potential of TAFE. Promotion of TAFE programmes in rural areas is very poor. Even the educators who participated in the workshop and who would be expected to disseminate information about TAFE to students as part of their educational role, had little understanding of the range of educational services offered by TAFE.

An effective promotion campaign was believed to be essential to increasing participation in TAFE. In particular, there was a strong emphasis on the importance of marketing TAFE courses to secondary school students. Moreover, the introduction of school/TAFE link courses, similar to those implemented in some urban centres, may well overcome the problem of low student numbers which have hitherto been a constraining factor in the range of courses offered by TAFE in rural areas.

In addition, considerable support was given to the suggestion that TAFE programmes be located in regional high schools. The utilization of existing facilities would substantially reduce the cost to TAFE of establishing educational facilities in rural locations. Cost savings could then be redirected to other areas such as broadening the range of courses offered and increasing the number of lecturing staff.

The promotion of direct and overlapping entry from secondary schooling may be effective in increasing participation of young Aborigines in TAFE courses. However, alternative approaches may be more effective in encouraging the participation of older Aborigines, especially those whose previous educational experiences have resulted in negative attitudes towards the formal schooling environment, and for those living in isolated Aboriginal communities who are precluded from participating in courses in centralized locations on the basis of distance.

One alternative suggested by workshop participants was for TAFE to establish community education centres in Aboriginal communities. In this way, education services would be provided in a familiar, non-threatening environment. The major difficulty with such a proposal is however, the problem of low student numbers. It is unlikely that community enrolment numbers in any one course would meet TAFE's minimum enrolment requirement of 8-10 students. It is however, possible that community education centres could be utilized to assist students enrolled in external TAFE courses. The external study mode, the only alternative for many people living in

rural areas, was seen as inappropriate for Aboriginal people (see Study 3, Appendix I), primarily because of the lack of support offered to students studying independently.

Community education centres could provide this much needed support, and in addition, offer a number of other benefits including liaison with community members on courses required; vocational counselling, literacy and numeracy courses for those whose lack of skills in these areas prohibit entry to mainstream courses; non-academic courses in personal development, life skills and arts and crafts.

5.5 SUMMARY

In summary, the workshop provided a valuable forum in which to discuss the role of TAFE in providing educational services to Aborigines in remote areas. It is clear from these discussions that a number of innovative strategies will need to be implemented in order to increase the participation of rural Aborigines in TAFE courses.

6

SUMMARY OF MAJOR ISSUES

The following points highlight the major issues arising from the four studies undertaken.

6.1 MAINSTREAM PARTICIPATION

Enrolment records show that although TAFE is the major provider of post-secondary education for Aborigines in West Australia, only 20 per cent of Aboriginal TAFE students are enrolled in accredited courses leading to a recognized qualification. These mainstream participation rates compare very unfavourably with those for other Australians.

6.2 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The unreliability of data relating to Aboriginal student numbers in TAFE noted in the present research, indicates the need for a review of current information management procedures. Current inadequacies in the system pose a serious threat to the validity of research related to Aboriginal participation in TAFE.

6.3 PROMOTION OF TAFE COURSES

The present research indicated that one of the major constraints to Aboriginal participation in TAFE courses is a lack of awareness among Aboriginal people about the range of educational programmes offered. Moreover, data from the teacher survey suggests that Aborigines do not view TAFE courses as either appropriate or relevant to their particular occupational and/or educational needs.

Future marketing campaigns should therefore be both intensive and detailed in order to show the link between clearly articulated educational pathways and the occupational and educational aspirations of potential students.

6.4 COUNSELLING

The nature of difficulties experienced by Aboriginal students identified in the current study, together with factors related to student withdrawal highlighted in previous research, indicates the need to review the counselling role as it relates to Aboriginal students in TAFE colleges.

There appears to be a high degree of reluctance on the part of Aboriginal TAFE students, particularly Access students, to approach college counsellors about personal problems. It has been suggested that the principal reason for this stems from a lack of familiarity with counselling staff. In the case of Access students, this counselling role is undertaken by course ecturers. This situation is undesirable for a number of reasons. Firstly, Access lecturers are given no time allocation for

counselling activities and furthermore such a function is outside their realm of expertise. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, data from the teacher survey suggests that the counselling role played by Access lecturers, with its consequent emphasis on student-centred factors, may detract from lecturers' primary academic role of remediating literacy and numeracy skills.

6.5 OCCUPATIONAL GOALS

The present study showed that the level of occupations sought by Access students was considerably higher than would be expected on the basis of their current skills. Indeed the career aspirations of the majority of students require specialist training such as that offered in TAFE mainstream courses. It is clear from these findings that the majority of Access students do not view this course as an end in itself, but rather as a vital first step towards achieving their occupational goals. These results clearly indicate the need for effective bridging programmes which facilitate access to mainstream courses.

6.6 ISSUES RELATED TO RURAL ABORIGINES

Given the nature of employment opportunities available in rural areas, it is not surprising to find that rural Aborigines generally demonstrate a more 'practical' occupational orientation than their urban counterparts. TAFE presently offers a number of non-accredited short courses focusing on a range of narrowly defined occupational skills which purport to meet these particular needs. It is however, important to note that previous research (Hughes 1988) clearly indicates that recognized qualifications, such as those obtained from accredited mainstream courses, offer Aborigines (particularly those in rural areas) the best opportunities for positive employment outcomes.

Furthermore, self-management, the desire for which is strongly expressed by those Aborigines living in isolated rural communities, requires a level of education most effectively gained through accredited mainstream courses provided within their particular communities.

6.7 LITERACY AND NUMERACY EDUCATION

It is clear from the current research that the unacceptably low participation rates for Aborigines in TAFE mainstream vocational courses are primarily due to a lack of pre-requisite academic skills, most particularly, low literacy and numeracy.

The TAFE Aboriginal Access course, which since its inception, has maintained a charter to provide an education programme which allows students to obtain the specific academic skills necessary for further education has been shown to be relatively unsuccessful in facilitating access to mainstream courses. It is therefore, imperative that TAFE implement more effective alternative strategies for remediating educational deficits, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy.

Previous research and educational practice suggest that a programme structure consisting of sequential, task-specific modules would provide optional learning outcomes in the remediation of literacy and numeracy. Moreover, the ability of such programmes to offer multiple entry points make them particularly appropriate in accommodating the wide variation in skills level of Aboriginal students whose individual needs do not appear to be met by the current orientation of the Access course.

7

RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM MAJOR ISSUES

The following recommendations result from the major issues highlighted by the four studies undertaken. They should be read in conjunction with the rest of the report rather than in isolation.

Recommendation 1 : Enclave Workers

That enclave workers be appointed to all TAFE colleges with significant Aboriginal enrolments. The role of these individuals would be to provide academic support to Aboriginal students enrolled in both Access and mainstream courses. This support would include; courses in study skills and examination techniques; establishment and co-ordination of extra tutorials; homework/assignment groups.

Recommendation 2 : Promotion of TAFE Courses

Promotion campaigns for TAFE courses be developed which are targeted particularly towards secondary school and Access students. Information about the educational services provided by TAFE should also be disseminated to secondary school teachers.

Recommendation 3 : Future Research

(i) Further research be conducted with respect to possible differences in educational motivation as determined by sex and age in Aboriginal people.

(ii) TAFE, in collaboration with the Health Department, undertake research into the nature and extent of health problems among Aboriginal adults which are related to withdrawal from educational programmes.

Recommendation 4 : TAFE Centres in Regional High Schools

TAFE negotiate with the Ministry of Education regarding the feasibility of establishing TAFE centres in regional high schools.

Recommendation 5 : School/TAFE Programmes

School/TAFE programmes be established in rural areas which allow secondary school students to undertake introductory subjects for selected TAFE courses in conjunction with required secondary units.

Recommendation 6 : Community Education Centres

The establishment of community education centres in isolated Aboriginal communities. The function of these centres would be; to provide support to students undertaking external TAFE courses; offer literacy and numeracy courses and community education courses; liaise with community members with regard to other educational needs.

Recommendation 7 : Counselling

(i) TAFE college counsellors to provide vocational counselling to Aboriginal Access students focussing specifically on educational pathways leading to particular occupational goals and co-ordination of work experience activities associated with vocational courses.

(ii) College counsellors (with assistance from enclave workers and Aboriginal Access liaison officers) develop strategies which address financial and health problems for Aboriginal Access students.

Recommendation 8 : Enrolment Records

(i) That TAFE implement previous recommendations with respect to improving the management of information regarding Aboriginal student enrolments.

(ii) That a mandatory question be included on all TAFE enrolment forms requesting students to specify the source of any award, scholarship or study grant.

Recommendation 9 : Development of Literacy and Numeracy Programmes

That literacy and numeracy programmes be developed to remediate deficits in these skills. Optimal effectiveness could be achieved with the use of a modular programme structure based on adult learning principles.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

WEST AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTIONS AT WHICH ABORIGINALS ARE ENROLLED

Institution

TAFE External Studies College

Rossmoyne Evening Technical School

Wembley College of TAFE

Thornlie College of TAFE

South West Regional College of TAFE (Bunbury)

Rockingham College of TAFE

Perth Technical College

Mount Lawley College of TAFE

Midland College of TAFE

Leederville College of TAFE

Great Southern Regional College of TAFE (Albany)

Geraldton Regional College of TAFE

Fremantle College of TAFE

Carine College of TAFE

Bentley College of TAFE

Balga College of TAFE

Murdoch University

University of Western Australia

Curtin University of Technology

Karratha College

Kalgoorlie College

Hedland College

York Technical Centre

Wyndham Technical Centre

Wagin Regional TAFE Centre

APPENDIX A
Institution (Cont'd)

Tambellup Technical Centre

Northam Regional TAFE Centre

Narrogin Technical Centre

Kununurra Regional TAFE Centre

Esperance TAFE School

Collie TAFE School

Broome Regional TAFE Centre

Bunbury Institute of Advanced Education

WA Academy of Performing Arts

Institute of Applied Aboriginal Studies

Western Australian College of Advanced Education - Carnarvon

Western Australian College of Advanced Education - Churchlands Campus

Western Australian College of Advanced Education - Claremont Campus

Western Australian College of Advanced Education - Mt Lawley Campus

Western Australian College of Advanced Education - Nedlands Campus

Carnarvon Technical Centre

APPENDIX B

STUDENT SURVEY

1 Listed below are some reasons why people enrol in educational courses. How much are these your reasons for enrolling in your course? (Please tick one box for each reason).

	Not a Reason	A Minor Reason	A Major Reason
To learn things to improve my daily life	☐	☐	☐
To learn about the things that interest me	☐	☐	☐
To improve my confidence in myself	☐	☐	☐
To meet people	☐	☐	☐
To improve my education	☐	☐	☐
To help my children	☐	☐	☐
To get into another course	☐	☐	☐
To develop new career interests	☐	☐	☐
To learn more about my culture	☐	☐	☐
To get a job	☐	☐	☐

What other reasons do you have for enrolling in the course?

_____

_____

_____

2 What would you like to do in the future?

Get a job No |___|

Yes |___| _____
What kind of job would you like?

Do another education course?

No |___|

Yes |___| _____
What course do you want to do?

Something else

_____
Please write in

Please continue on next page

3 Listed below are some problems people may have when they are studying. How much of a problem has each of these been for you during your course? (Please tick one box for each).

	Not a Problem	A Minor Problem	A Major Problem
Child Care	☐	☐	☐
Discrimination	☐	☐	☐
Money Problems	☐	☐	☐
Housing Problems	☐	☐	☐
Illness (personal or family)	☐	☐	☐
Transport	☐	☐	☐
Family	☐	☐	☐
The course doesn't meet my needs	☐	☐	☐
Poor communication skills	☐	☐	☐
The course is too difficult	☐	☐	☐
Poor study habits	☐	☐	☐
Lack of help from teaching staff	☐	☐	☐
Lack of quiet study space at home	☐	☐	☐
Inadequate counselling services at the college	☐	☐	☐
Not enough time for other things	☐	☐	☐
Lack of friends	☐	☐	☐

What other problems have you had during the course?

_____

_____

_____

4 How often do you seek help or advice from the following staff members?

	Never	Sometimes	Often
Teachers	☐	☐	☐
College Counsellor	☐	☐	☐
Course Co-ordinator	☐	☐	☐
Any other staff member	☐	☐	☐

Please write in what this person does at the college

5 How long do you think it will be before you finish the course? (Please tick one box only).

- End of this year ☐
- End of first semester next year ☐
- End of second semester next year ☐
- Later than the end of next year ☐
- Don't know ☐

6 How did you first find out about the course that you are enrolled in? (Please tick one box only).

- From the newspaper ☐
- From college pamphlets ☐
- From friends ☐
- From a Welfare Worker ☐
- From a Liaison Officer ☐
- From an Employment Officer ☐
- Other _____ ☐
  Please write in

7 What were you doing before you started the course? (Please tick one box only).

Looking after the house |___|

Employed full-time |___|

Employed part-time |___|

Looking for work |___|

Working for myself |___|

Not looking for work |___|

8 Sex : Female |___| Male |___|

9 Age : _____ years

10 What was the highest year you completed at school?

Earlier than Year 7 (Primary) |___|

Year 7 |___|

Years 8 or 9 (lower secondary) |___|

Year 10 |___|

Year 11 |___|

Year 12 |___|

11 Have you completed any courses since you left school?

No |___|

Yes |___| _____

Please write in the name of the course and the year completed.

12 What College do you attend now?

_____

Please write in

13 What course are you currently enrolled in full-time?

_____
Please write in

14 Are you enrolled in any other courses part-time?

No |___|

Yes |___| _____
Name of Course

15 Did you start a course in the past which you did not complete?

No |___|

Yes |___| _____
Please write in the name of the course and how long you were enrolled.

APPENDIX C

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING STUDENT SURVEY

1 Please explain to students that the results of this survey will be used to improve educational opportunities for Aboriginal people.

2 Stress to students that the questionnaire is completely anonymous. No names or identification numbers are used.

3 Please work through questions one at a time with the students. Ask students not to fill in the next question until everyone has finished the previous one.

4 Please ensure that students answer ALL questions.

5 Questions

- 1 - Students need to tick one of the three (3) boxes (not a reason, a minor reason or a major reason) for EACH item.
- 3 - Same as for question 1 - students need to tick one of the three (3) boxes for EACH item.
- 6 - They may have found out about the course from more than one of the sources listed but ask them to tick only the PRIMARY source.
- 15 - If they attempted more than one course ask them to list them (most recent one first).

6 Please make a separate list of the names and student numbers of those who completed the survey and of those who did not and return with the surveys.

APPENDIX D

COURSES COMPLETED PRIOR TO ENROLMENT IN THE ABORIGINAL ACCESS COURSE

COURSE	FREQUENCY
Aboriginal Access Course	1
Child Care	2
Secretarial	2
Short Course	1
Business	4
Aboriginal Pre-primary Teaching	1
Linguistics	1
Other Bridging Course	2

APPENDIX E

PRIOR COURSE STARTED BUT NOT COMPLETED

COURSE	FREQUENCY
Bridging Course	1
Accounting	2
Typing/Shorthand	2
Aboriginal Access	8
Secretarial	1
Carpentry	1
Business	2
Child Care (CCC)	2

APPENDIX F

OCCUPATIONS SOUGHT BY CURRENT ACCESS STUDENTS

OCCUPATION	ASCO MAJOR CODE	ASCO MINOR CODE	FREQ.
Kindergarten Teacher	2	24	2
Professional Signwriter	4	44	1
Secretary	5	51	8
Childcare	6	66	9
Welfare Worker	3	39	8
Labourer	8		1
Artist	2	28	2
Health Worker	3	31	5
Business	2	27	2
Carpenter	4	44	1
Related to Aborigines	3	39	4
Social Worker	2	26	3
Trades	4	n/a	4
Public Service	5	59	3
Dressmaking	4	49	1
Clerk	5	59	3
Primary Teaching	2	24	5
Ranger	3	39	2
Office Work	5	59	1
Spray Painting	4		1
Sales Assistant	6	63	2
Nursing	3	34	1
Landscaping	4	48	1
Hairdressing	4	49	1
Chef	4	47	1
Outdoor Work	8		2
Travel Consultant	6	65	1
Cleaner	8	83	1

APPENDIX G

EDUCATIONAL COURSES SOUGHT BY ACCESS STUDENTS

COURSE	FREQUENCY
Secretarial	6
Nursing	2
Horticulture	1
Art	1
Welfare Studies	9
Typing	1
Dressmaking	2
Bridging Course	5
Mechanics	2
Child Care	6
Maths	1
Administration (Aboriginal)	1
Business Management	1
Literature	1
Language	1
Bookkeeping	1
Teaching	3
Social Sciences	1
T E E	2
Social Work	1
Health Worker	2
Apprenticeships	1
Travel Consultant Course	1

APPENDIX H

A SURVEY OF TEACHING STAFF

TAFE is very keen to increase the participation of Aborigines in mainstream Certificate and Diploma courses. At present their enrolment in these types of courses is very low. A survey of all Aboriginal students enrolled in Access/Bridging courses is currently being undertaken to identify problems from the student perspective. We would appreciate your views on possible strategies that would improve Aboriginal access to mainstream courses.

1 What do you think are the major barriers standing in the way of Aborigines participating in mainstream courses?

2 What strategies can you suggest to overcome these problems?

APPENDIX I

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF MAJOR BARRIERS TO MAINSTREAM PARTICIPATION

PERCENTAGE	MAJOR PERCEIVED BARRIERS
48.1	Lack of pre-requisite literacy and numeracy skills
48.1	Poor general educational background
40.1	Lack of self-confidence
37.0	Feelings of isolation in mainstream classes
37.0	Poor study habits
33.3	Conflict between family/community and study obligations
25.9	Aboriginal people do not appear to perceive a relationship between mainstream courses and increased occupational/educational opportunities
22.2	Aboriginal people do not see any relevance or benefit in education
22.2	Poor attendance
22.2	Cultural differences between Aboriginal students and non-Aboriginal students and teachers
18.5	Lack of motivation
14.8	Insufficient individual attention offered
14.8	Low self-esteem
11.9	Lack of role models in mainstream courses (both students and teachers)
11.1	Primary interest placed on social interests at the cost of education
11.1	Financial problems

(Cont'd)

PERCENTAGE	MAJOR PERCEIVED BARRIERS
11.1	Correspondence courses do not offer the support required by Aboriginal students to succeed
11.1	Fear of failure
11.1	Lack of transport
7.4	Lack of opportunity to participate due to physical isolation
7.4	Lack of perseverance
7.4	Reluctance to move away from family and friends to study
7.4	Lack of information about mainstream courses
7.4	Lack of child care facilities
7.4	Reluctance to discuss academic difficulties with teachers
3.7	Lack of communication between course organizers and Aboriginal communities
3.7	The college closest to potential students may not offer the type of courses and increased occupational/educational opportunities
3.7	Inadequate counselling facilities

APPENDIX J

REMEDIAL STRATEGIES PROPOSED BY TEACHERS

PROPOSED STRATEGIES	PERCENTAGE
Enclave support be provided to Aboriginal students	50.0
Promotion of mainstream courses to Aboriginal people	31.0
In-service course for all lecturers involved with Aboriginal students	23.0
More counselling to be provided to Aboriginal students	15.0
More Aboriginal involvement in course development	15.0
Extra tutorial classes for Aboriginal students	12.0
More Aboriginal staff members	12.0
More child care facilities	12.0

APPENDIX K

RESPONSE RATES FOR YOUNGER & OLDER MEN & WOMEN FOR "REASONS FOR ENROLLING" IN THE ACCESS COURSE

REASONS	WOMEN UNDER 25	WOMEN OVER 25	MEN UNDER 25	MEN OVER 25
To learn things for daily life	21.2	78.8	66.7	33.3
To learn things that interest me	18.8	81.3	57.1	42.9
To improve self-confidence	28.6	71.4	60.0	40.0
To meet people	8.7	91.3	60.0	40.0
To improve my education	24.2	75.8	66.7	33.3
To help my children	15.9	84.1	50.0	50.0
To get into another course	25.8	74.2	66.7	33.3
To develop new career interests	27.5	72.5	45.5	54.5
To learn about my culture	22.7	77.3	57.1	42.9
To get a job	34.0	66.0	75.0	25.0
Other reasons	4.8	14.3	12.4	3.6
X Response Rate	21.2	71.5	56.2	36.3